

# THE CRITIC.

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“From his brimstone bed at the break of day,  
“A walking the Devil has gone.”

THE legends of Monkish Historians record sundry visits of his Satanic Majesty to this world. Sometimes he abandoned his comfortable home in search of amusement, or weary of monotonous torments, pursued pleasure in various forms of malicious mischief, and not infrequently, like other great personages, he made “tours of observation” to collect materials for an eloquent Message, on his return to the assembled Senate.

Although French poets and learned Greek professors have described, with great unction, the amusing arcana of several diabolical perambulations, the philosophers of our unbelieving days reject these traditions as apocryphal, —“Le Diable Papefiguière,” and Satan “in

his Sunday's best," will therefore, I fear, avail but little to gain credit for this narrative, of a certain infernal sporting tour in an American commonwealth.

The curious document from which it is extracted, was obtained by means which do not admit of explanation, from the private portfolio of a person, whose knowledge of the secret machinations of the cabinet, was obviously gained by deep participation, but whose pictures are, perhaps, often tinged with the hues of disappointed ambition. The details of this modern "foray," are minutely recorded in the manuscript, but all my research has not enabled me to ascertain the precise district wherein it was achieved. If any of my correspondents, in different parts of the Union, can ascertain the locality of these occurrences, their communications will be thankfully received. In the mean time I caution all my readers against assigning them to any particular State, from imperfect resemblance, or upon inconclusive proofs.

The manuscript itself, from which I hope to make frequent extracts, may be seen by the curious at my rooms, in the street facing the *untaxable* lot of the Pennsylvania Hospital.—The part I now present to the public is entitled as follows, having these words written in red ink along the margin:

————— "quæque ipse miserrima vidi,  
Et quorum pars magna fui."

*"How the Devil turned Statesman and rose to great power in the Commonwealth, and how I served him faithfully until he discarded me."*

1805. "About this period Satan found the minds of men on the European Continent, imbued with the principles of reform and rich in revolutionary virtue. Disgusted with his inactive life, and despairing of a change, he resolved on instant emigration. Visiting the British Isles on his way, he soon discovered that, as every social and civil operation had arrived at perfection, and required no interposition, his presence there was equally unnecessary. Yet one land remained, which offered a noble field for the gratification of his sportive or his malicious propensities, and thither he directed his flight. On his arrival, he and his brother emigrants, of whom I was one, were greeted with a cordial welcome by all the imported patriots of the western world. We soon separated in pursuit of our different objects, and a long time elapsed before we again met. But I soon found, on the renewal of our acquaintance, that his Majesty had not been idle. The meagreness of political knowledge and virtue, and the ample provision of tools and materials for the enterprize, instantly determined his course. The State offered him a stage—he appeared in character—succeeded to admiration, and has ever since

been playing the Devil in this Commonwealth with wonderful éclat. Preserving forms and destroying principles—confusing what was clear, and proscribing what he could not confuse—illuminating jurisprudence with a “patent revolving light”—subjecting public finance to private interest—and employing every one precisely as his Creator intended he never should be employed—he has, at length, to his own infinite amusement, erected a fabric of civil polity, unparalleled in the annals of the world. Having taken possession of an ancient statesman’s body, which from his technical pursuits, he thought might well last his “nine years,” he gradually, and by the most natural means worked his way to the supreme dignity, carrying along with him, (an instance of gratitude worthy the imitation of mortals) the various ladders by which he had ascended. Borne aloft by the absolute power of this republican office, and escorted by this chosen band of Imps, the masquerading Devil performed a series of exploits, in which it is hard for a human being to tell whether sportive malice, or stupidity, or destructive wickedness predominates. In forensic learning, by one barbarous edict, the accumulated wisdom of ages and its daily results, were banished from this region of intuitive wisdom. Frauds of every species were protected and legalized. Laws have been involved in interminable confusion, and their administration entrusted

to *mechanics* raised to the judicial bench, to qualify the harshness of the *lex scripta*, by their expanded and liberal views of natural equity. Public works were undertaken and millions expended—the attempts abandoned, and other improvements instituted, to be deserted in the same manner at the proper season. Offices were transferred, and friends provided for—

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1817. Satan himself must yield to fate—years rolled round—the carcass wherein he dwelt, lost its gubernatorial quality, and became by the constitution of the Commonwealth, ineligible for another term—A change of tenement was indispensable, and from this slight alteration arose all *my* difficulty and subsequent degradation.—For not being sufficiently in the confidence of the chief, I could obtain no positive information as to his future *residence*. Thus I was forced to choose one of three at a hazard, and unfortunately missed my mark—And to preserve appearances with mortals, I am now superciliously discarded. Let no man trust in princes. It is hard to serve two masters, but incomparably more tormenting to obey one master of two different natures—for no man can tell what character he will choose to be in when the service is exacted.—Yet, unconnected as I have re-

cently been with the reigning chief, his machinations have not escaped me—In 1819. all the extravagance of diabolical mischief, he seems determined to try the patience of his constituents to the utmost limit of endurance. Other potentates, ruling more extended territories, have been satisfied with one zany or buffoon, for the amusement of their vacant hours, and the renovation of their exhausted minds. But this Republican Monarch collects a whole court of jesters, mimics and speech makers, and for his own sport, and the edification of the American world, stripping them of the proper insignia of their office, he collects them into a body, and encourages their solemn mockery. The idea is novel, and the effects have answered the most sanguine expectations of the infernal projector. Surrounding states have looked on with amazement, and the constituents of the supposed assembly, are yet in the dark as to the moving cause of its operations. This splendid union of talents and wit, at the instigation of its dark skinned leader, has actually assumed all the forms of a deliberative body. It appoints committees—forms resolutions—makes reports—punishes contempts, and listens to eloquent harangues—in short, it accomplishes all the duties incumbent on that branch, almost as regularly as the black Mock-royalty of Hayti. This congregation of orators and legislators in the



present depression of business and lack of entertainment, continues by its extreme buffoonery, to preserve the spirits of the community from actual stagnation, and must richly compensate their Master for all the privations he has endured since leaving home.

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1819-20. But I am determined to record here some speculations of my own. Their subsequent fulfilment will entitle them to rank with previous *facts* of these memoirs. This statesman Devil, grows weary of his earthly charge, and will soon wish to divest himself of all his infernal authority. This he will of course do in his own style and time. But to triumph completely over poor mortals, and extricate himself from all dangers, without the agency of supernatural means, will be his last great work—the chef d'œuvre of a master. Disgust is universal against his government. Numerous offences in the division of the spoil, he certainly has committed.—The imps who acted with him for years, will unite to crush him by a public trial and exposure—All the hidden wickedness of his political course will be exhibited to the world—and its concentrated horrors urged for his condemnation. But Satan will not shun the investigation—He courts the enquiry and enjoys in anticipation the final discomfiture of

his enemies—"I govern," he exclaims with a diabolical grin, "a republic—I claim the privilege of its forms—*The Devil will be tried by his PEERS and acquitted.*"

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This *historiette*, as it reached me, is most *incredibly* attested. Sceptics will doubt—the profane sneer, and the pious reject it as unauthorized by inspired revelation. My own faith in its truth will remain unshaken, until the Philosophical Society favour the world with a dissertation on Demonology, or satisfactorily account on physical grounds, for the countless anomalies in our civil, military and social institutions.

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